## THE NEW YORK PRESS.

EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS UPON CURREST TOPICS—COMPILED EVERY DAY FOR THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

### Gerrit Smith's Speech at Richmond.

*From the Herald.*

Gerrit Smith made a speech to a mixed assembly of black and white people at Richmond on Tuesday which was full of characteristic benevolence, and contained broader and more sensible views than the speeches of any other Northern orator now in the South. He did not spare the South for its sins and follies, for bringing on the war, or for attempting, in some cases, to run away from the restoration terms of Congress; but he blamed the North also for its share in bringing on the trouble and for its want of magnanimity. Though under the Constitution those who took part in fighting against the Government are traitors to-day, he said he was "averse to having his countrymen (the Southerners) go down to posterity stigmatized as traitors. When this strife had advanced to a great civil war, with a *de facto* Government, and carrying on a war as an independent power, they were no longer traitors. He wanted thus to lift them from their supposed degradation. The North, he would say, was under a common responsibility with the South for the late war." After speaking of slavery as the cause of the war, and the North being equally guilty with the South for establishing and maintaining that institution, he added, "We of the North reaped far more gain from slavery than you did. You but held the cow—we milked it." He said he was not an advocate of confiscation, and advised the blacks not to ask for it, but to seek homes by their honest earnings. He would also relieve the South for half-a-dozen years from direct Federal taxes, to enable the people to recover something of their former prosperity. Congress, he said, should have appropriated ten or twenty millions of dollars to that suffering land. How such broad and liberal views contrast with the narrow and illiberal policy of Congress in taxing the productions of the South at a time when they most need assistance! How different is this speech of Gerrit Smith to those threatening and mere partisan speeches of Wilson, Kelley, and some other Northern orators in the South! We think Gerrit Smith would do a great deal of good were he to follow those other speakers throughout the South, and we recommend him to do so.

### The Present Condition of the English Reform Question.

*From the Tribune.*

On the 9th of May the House of Commons had again an important debate on the Reform question. The cable vaguely states that it was an amendment proposed by Disraeli which on this occasion called forth an excited discussion. We are not informed of the character of the amendment; but from the circumstance that it drew out elaborate speeches from Gladstone, Bright, and Disraeli, we infer that it concerned an important feature of the bill. The two parties again measured their strength, and the result was another decisive defeat of the liberals, the Government obtaining a majority of 66. We did not need the assurance of a subsequent cable despatch for knowing that the preservation of the Tory Cabinet may now be regarded as secured. The friends of a real, progressive Reform bill can no longer expect to reconstruct in the present Parliament a trustworthy majority which could be relied upon when points of vital importance are at stake. The bolters from the liberal ranks have clearly shown that they are more sincere and thorough in their hatred of democracy, and of every measure looking like an advance towards democracy, than in their desire to appear more liberal than the Tories. They may again be willing to coöperate with the liberal party on some particular occasion, and not shrink from causing thereby the defeat of the Tories; but they will never be again regarded as an integral portion of the party which proclaims its belief in a steady progress towards universal manhood suffrage.

The friends of reform have reason to feel disappointed at their defeats in the House of Commons, but their noble efforts during the past year are very far from being lost. Two great results have been obtained. In the first place, the masses of the people have been thoroughly stirred up, and their influence has begun to be felt. The reform agitation of the past winter has, in point of magnitude and efficiency, by far eclipsed the movements of former years. The people have spoken out their opinion, and their words have been heeded. The Tories have been intimidated by the reform demonstrations, and have deemed it necessary to court the favor of the people by apparently making concessions. If this organization of the disfranchised classes can be kept up and improved, the cause of reform will soon make headway. The Tories are well aware that nearly every one of them represents only a small community, and that even the votes of their few constituents are chiefly obtained by fear. The large constituencies are, even now, all on the side of reform. If with them the disfranchised masses demand the extension of suffrage, even the Tories cannot fail to see the danger of their position.

Already this dread of the power of the people, who begin to demand their right, has produced a serious demoralization in the ranks of the Tories. That portion of the party which looks more for the purity of principles quarrels with the portion that looks more for the preservation of power. The last number of the great organ of the Tory party, the *Quarterly Review*, declares that the present position of the party is most humiliating; that the introduction of the Tory Reform bill of 1859 was a mistake, and was the doing of Mr. Disraeli, in opposition to the wishes of his party. The same opinion was held by those colleagues of Disraeli who recently left the Cabinet rather than subscribe to the concessions which the majority of the Cabinet had concluded to make.

Disraeli is the determined leader of those Tories who consider the preservation of power as more essential than the preservation of principles, and as his recent abandonment of the rating franchise for the lodger franchise again indicated, would be disposed to yield even more if thereby he could keep the Liberals out of power. But with every step he advances in this direction, the number of those who are unwilling to follow him will increase. Thus several prominent members of his Cabinet, and among them Lord Stanley, are strongly committed against household suffrage, pure and simple, and would hesitate to follow Disraeli should he make on this question another important concession.

While we therefore expect nothing from the present Parliament, we think there is ample reason for anticipating a steady progress of the good cause of Reform from the more determined attitude of the English people. The English people deserve a better fate than to be forever the slaves of their aristocracy, and we hope that if their rights should be withheld from them much longer, they will know how to conquer them.

### Punishment for Political Offenses.

*From the Herald.*

The commutation of General Burke's sentence by the English Government was a foregone conclusion. No one expected that the death penalty would be carried out in his case. He is of the stamp of men whom it is impolitic to make martyrs of. The soil soaked with their blood is poetically but truly said to be sown with dragon's teeth. Had Lord Edward Fitzgerald and the Sheares been merely condemned to perpetual imprisonment or banishment, the task of government in Ireland for the last half century might not have been as difficult as it has proved.

Executions for political offenses have happily become impossible in the future. Our example has settled that question. If a Government such as ours can forgive the treason committed against it by men like Davis and Lee, no other dare carry its vindictiveness to such an extreme. It is true that in Jamaica the example failed to exercise any influence, but there was no time for the British Government to interfere, and there is no fear of its occurring again. British officials will take care in the future how they run the risk of exciting another such storm of indignation as that elicited by the execution of Mr. Gordon. The feeling might not, perhaps, have taken so threatening a form had it not been for the magnanimity displayed by our Government towards the leaders of the Rebellion. We witness daily in evil things the force of example. In a matter which touches so closely the interests of civilization and humanity, it is gratifying to find that we have led the way to the abolition of a practice which is consistent only with a condition of barbarism.

### Our Financial Prospects.

*From the Times.*

We hear from Washington that the Secretary of the Treasury expresses the opinion very freely, that no further reduction of the public debt need be expected at present; indeed, the chances are that the debt will be *increased* within the next three months.

We fear we are approaching the end of the agreeable delusions we have been nursing in regard to our debt and taxes. So much has been said of the exhaustless resources of our country—our people have submitted so gracefully to the taxes imposed upon them, and the actual reduction of the debt from month to month has been so considerable, that we began to look upon the whole thing as a bagatelle. It has been assumed that the debt was to be paid within twenty or thirty years at furthest, and that, too, without special effort or special hardships in any quarter. All this was possible only while business in every department was flourishing—while labor was abundant and well rewarded; while everybody was getting rich, and could afford to pay heavy taxes.

All this begins already to be reversed. The tide is turning. Business is dull—prices are so exorbitant that labor, which commands enormous wages, can scarcely earn a living—the profits of all branches of industry have fallen off, and everybody begins to feel comparatively poor. Evidences of this are seen in every direction. There is nothing like the expenditure among business men, or in society or private life, that was witnessed a year ago. The Park is no longer crowded with showy equipages. Costly dinners, extravagant displays of wealth at evening parties, lavish expenditures for luxury in dress, no longer characterize our fashionable circles. All this is apparent, and indicates unmistakably a very different state of things from what has existed hitherto since the war. Men no longer look upon taxation as a trifle. They feel it as a burden, growing heavier and heavier, instead of lighter, every day. The return of incomes in New York city will not be one-half what it was last year, and the same thing is said to be true throughout the country.

The action of Congress at the last session tended to make things worse. It was utterly impossible to get the attention of the majority to the finances, as a subject of paramount importance. Political projects absorbed their attention. Nearly half the aggregate income tax was deliberately thrown away. Instead of aiding and fostering Southern industry, so as to augment Southern ability to pay its share of taxation, everything done tended to depress and crush it. Not a dollar of aid was given to repair the Mississippi levees, though that measure alone would have yielded millions through the sugar tax. The culture of cotton was taxed. Capital in the South was loaded with exactions and disabilities which it was utterly unable to bear. The lessons of experience and common sense were deliberately sacrificed, in every direction, to political passion or personal interest. The adjustment of duties on foreign imports was made in utter disregard of its relations to the revenue, and became a venal and disgraceful scramble among special interests for Government favor and protection.

All these acts are just now beginning to bear their natural fruits. The revenue is falling off heavily; progress in redeeming the public debt must be suspended; taxation begins to be felt by all classes as a heavy burden; and there is every prospect that all these evils will grow worse and worse, instead of being relieved and removed. Enormous claims, still unliquidated, remain to be added to the aggregate of the public debt, and there is at least an even chance that the taxation of the industry of the country must be increased rather than diminished, to meet the exactions of the impending furtue.

These things prove the absolute necessity of greater economy in the management of our finances, and greater wisdom in the adoption of plans for developing our resources and alleviating the burden of taxation. Whether we may reasonably hope for these aids is a matter of doubt; but it is very certain that without them the country will plunge deeper and deeper into trouble and confusion.

### The Sale of the Dunderberg.

*From the Herald.*

The sale of the armor-plated monster, the Dunderberg, to the first naval power of Europe, is a proof that American talent is at least unsurpassed in the Old World, and that in case of actual war our whole coast would be alive with activity in the building of vessels with which to pay off old scores and wipe out Alabama remembrances.

The sale of the Dunderberg will set our English friends to thinking. Behind her walls of iron her two 15-inch guns and twelve more each of 11-inch calibre would make wild work on the Thames or along the unprotected coast of Prussia. No English iron-clad could live five minutes above water under the terrific fire of the batteries of the Dunderberg. The only way for John Bull to keep his naval balance, now so nearly lost, is to order of us a better craft, which our skilled mechanics can readily turn out. We have no jealousies, and feel so strong in our geographical position that we are quite willing to undertake for the English what they appear unable to do for themselves—build a naval fleet capable of coping with that of their French rival.

All of our iron-clads are for sale. Our policy now is economy. The confidence we possess in our productive powers is such that we are quite willing to dispose of all our old stock, preparatory to producing a new and better article.

### The Kentucky Elections.

*From the World.*

The returns of the late Congressional elections in Kentucky are as yet far from complete; but the majorities for the Democratic candidates, as announced by telegraph, probably approximate to those to be revealed by the official canvass. Appended are the majorities in each district at the Congressional elections in 1865 and at the State election in 1866:—

| | 1865. | | 1866. | | 1867. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Dist.* | *Dem.* | *Rep.* | *Dem.* | *Rep.* | *Dem.* | *Rep.* |
| First..... | 2277 | ..... | 9378 | ..... | 8000 | ..... |
| Second. | 1188 | ..... | 4456 | ..... | 4591 | ..... |
| Third... | 1657 | ..... | 5199 | ..... | 6000 | ..... |
| Fourth | 5785 | ..... | 5575 | ..... | 5414 | ..... |
| Fifth... | ..... | 1047 | 5318 | ..... | 3582 | ..... |
| Sixth... | ..... | 1245 | 63-0 | ..... | 5641 | ..... |
| Sev'th.. | 3084 | ..... | 7647 | ..... | 6721 | ..... |
| Eighth | ..... | 6810 | ..... | 5745 | 800 | ..... |
| Ninth.. | ..... | 1922 | 416 | ..... | 1200 | ..... |
| Total. | 14 518 | 11,024 | 42,036 | 6748 | 41,962 | ..... |

It will be seen from these figures that whereas, in 1865, the Democrats elected five of the nine Congressmen, and in 1866 carried eight of the nine Congressional districts, in 1867 they have elected all their candidates for Congressmen by majorities varying from 800 to 8000. The total Democratic majority in this State this year was about 42,000, though the vote polled was lighter than that of last August. Such is Kentucky's noble response to Connecticut.

The important feature of this result, however, is not so much the defeat of the radicals—which was to be expected—as the complete rout, horse, foot, and dragoons, of the "so-called" independent Democrats. The latter, dissatisfied with the action of the regular Democratic State Convention which met in February to nominate a State ticket, held a convention of their own, nominated candidates for State officers, and followed up this action by running separate Congressional candidates in every district but one. Their chief organ, the Louisville *Democrat*, blew its trumpet vigorously up to the morning of election day, only to find at nightfall that every one of its candidates had been ignominiously defeated. It is to be hoped that the bolters, profiting by this experience, will spare themselves the shame of a similar defeat at the election for State officers next August. There are Democrats, too, nearer the Atlantic coast who might profit by the lesson of this Kentucky election.

### Slavery Doomed in Brazil.

*From the Independent.*

The telegram of date April 8, which announced with customary brevity that the Emperor of Brazil had signed the decree of the General Assembly abolishing slavery throughout the empire, though covering one of the most important and pregnant facts of the decade—for we count big events by decades, not by ages, now—comes to us glibly over the wires, and probably passes as glibly over the minds of most readers of news. No doubt one explanation of the very moderate interest it excites is to be found in the circumstance that Brazil is a great way off, that its affairs are of no very great interest to us, that its revolutions do not immediately affect us, and that little is popularly known in regard to its people, its institutions, or its government. But a better explanation is to be sought probably in the familiarity of the public mind with great movements of emancipation. Since France abolished slavery in her colonies, and England abolished it in hers; since

"The slave walked free in Tunis,
And by Stamboul's Golden Horn;"

since Russia gave freedom to her 25,000,000 serfs; and the United States, timidly following these imperial examples, broke the chains of her 4,000,000 chattels, nothing less than universal liberty has been looked for. Emancipation is taken as a matter of course; and a matter of course it is. But we must not allow that common phrase to conceal from us the immense change in public sentiment that has made such a moral victory to be a matter of course. Emancipation was no matter of course in England or France. In France it was achieved by a freshet of enthusiasm; in England it was carried by a long and severe agitation, in face of every vested interest and chartered right. It was not a matter of course in Russia, where the nobles resisted it and fairly made the crown recoil. Nor was it a matter of course in the United States; for here a moral warfare, unparalleled for its steady and fatal valor, raged around slavery for a generation. A vast political party was organized against it; industry, commerce, manufactures, all felt it to be a foe, if they did not call it so; and at last a terrible civil war did its utmost to root it out. Even then it perished slowly; even then its abolition, so far from being a matter of course, was resisted and impeded by politicians, and aristocrats, and major-generals, and privy counsellors. Providence with an iron hand wrung emancipation from the great republic. Why, then, does it seem so natural a thing that it should be decreed by a constitutional monarchy, as a grand state measure in a time of peace; there being no pressure which is in the air, and no convulsion within, save the moral convulsion that takes place when a right-minded and generous Government recognized an absolute inconsistency between its principles and its practices, its spirit and its traditions? Brazil is a thinly peopled country. There are about as many negro slaves there as white inhabitants—nigh three millions of each; it is a tropical climate, warm and luxuriant, favoring indolence rather than energy; its chief productions until recently were precious stones and dust, and now are coffee, sugar, cotton, tobacco—which we have been told all our days could be raised advantageously by slave labor alone. There was uneasiness on the subject of slavery; but no such deep abhorrence of it as prevailed among ourselves—there was no suppressed war threatening yearly to become open war. Why, then, does Brazil emancipate her slaves?

In the first place, the spirit of the age was abroad. Brazil was the last great empire which maintained the old barbarism of the nations. A passion for popular liberty had taken possession of Europe. Even the most absolute despotisms, however much they might oppress their subjects, did not make race an excuse for oppression; and when the United States gave up the cause, no great example remained to keep an empire in countenance; no example remained at all but Spain; and Spain is an example chiefly of what States should avoid.

And then the genius of the Brazilian Government was thoroughly averse to an institution like slavery. Few more enlightened governments exist. The General Assembly represents the people liberally, being elected under a generous franchise. The Emperor Don Pedro is an enlightened man, a zealous patron of science, literature, the arts, and an earnest friend of liberal institutions. The press is free; public education is free. There are grammar schools and primary schools, mercantile academies and lyceums. Upwards of one hundred periodicals—literary, scientific, and political—are published there. There are learned societies and large libraries, public and private, in the principal cities. The educated classes are influential in society. Religious toleration is established, though the Church of Rome is the instituted faith; and there was a time when its priests labored hard, and not unsuccessfully, for the instruction of the people. A spirit like this diffused among the ruling and influential class, could not fail to bear steadily against the system of negro slavery.

Then, too, the Brazilians, appreciating the value of fresh blood in their populations, welcomed foreigners to their country, and offered handsome inducements for Europeans and others to come and live among them. Extensive grants of land were made under the present Emperor's administration, on condition that one hundred thousand people would settle on it within an allotted time. The one hundred thousand did not come; but many thousands did, mostly Germans and Swiss, who formed industrious and thriving colonies in different parts of the country. The instinct of freedom was in all of these. They were centres of civilization. Lines of communication and transport soon became necessary, and were no sooner necessary than they were laid. Public roads were made; railways were projected on a large scale; steamboats were built; loans were negotiated; European capital secured; powerful companies formed and chartered; and improvements of immense magnitude went bravely on, under the direction of the best English and American engineers. How was slavery to stand in the face of this? For there were no North and South, as with us, but the spirit of the Government made it all North.

In a mild and moderate fashion, too, the Government, which meant the people who possessed an annual income of fifty dollars and upwards, has long shown itself opposed to the slave system. The Portuguese, finding the native Indians unfit, and therefore unprofitable as slaves, let them go, after a long experiment in cruelty, and imported negroes from their African possessions. The slave-trade flourished, as it did everywhere. It flourished in spite of protests and treaties. The young Emperor was crowned in 1841. Four years after his coming to the throne, stout old England declared that her laws against piracy should control the seas, and that all captured slavers should be amenable to them. Brazil, after a little bluster, gave in, declared the slave-trade piracy, and in a few years pronounced it extinct. The present Emperor signed its death-warrant in 1852.

But this is not all. Slavery itself in Brazil, owing to general causes, has been of a milder form than we have been accustomed to know it in our own Southern States. It did not spring from, nor did it produce the spirit of caste—that most deadly of social evils. In the army and navy, in agriculture, commerce, manufactures, trade, color was no obstacle to success and distinction. It did not make civil or social position untenable or precarious. The laws favored manumission; and manumission was often publicly celebrated by religious services. Once emancipated, the negro found himself not legally alone, but practically, as far as ability would allow, on an equal level with the whites. All this made the abolition of slavery easy. The work was already more than half done before the final measure was proposed. The *coup de grace* alone was wanting. All this, too, insures the full results of benefit from the act. Between their new world and the old there is no terrible middle passage for the blacks to pass through, as there is with us. They enter at once into the rights, duties, and privileges of civilized men. The details of the emanipation act are as yet provokingly meagre; but we can scarcely doubt that they recognize the manhood of the former slave, as a property-holder, a land-owner, a citizen in sight of the laws, a person with a career before him. There is no necessity in Brazil for the Civil Rights bills, the Military Reconstruction bills, the Freedmen's Bureau bills, and other protective measures which Republican America has been obliged to resort to in order that the blacks may enjoy the commonest human consideration. They can fall back at once on their manhood, and justify themselves.

To be sure, the emancipation is limited. None are free now but adults. The children born to-day will be free when they are twenty years old. Such a proviso here would have given occasion to the utmost anxiety and alarm. But it need cause no uneasiness in Brazil. Here, to say slavery may exist twenty years would probably have been equivalent to saying it may exist forever. But there, it is equivalent to saying it shall immediately pass away. The certainty of freedom on coming of age will make the youth of these slave girls and boys a very different thing from what it was before. They will be slaves in name only. All around them the men and women of their race will be living as free people live, in a condition of full enfranchisement, at once exhibiting and perfecting the state into which their sons and daughters are to come. The young serfs will belong to a race uplifted. It will be for the interest of their owners to treat them as future freemen, to be kind to them, to win their good will, to teach them, and in all possible ways to make their path smooth. It will not be strange if laws are passed in a few years dispensing with this proviso altogether. Considerations of property no doubt secured its introduction into the measure. But a slight experience of the benefits of full emancipation may perceptibly weaken considerations of that kind. Slavery has been unprofitable in Brazil ever since the suppression of the trade. And the new cultivation that has been introduced into the country, vastly to the advantage of its foreign commerce, must reduce still further the value of slave labor, and make property in slaves undesirable. Emancipation will remove the stigma of disgrace from rude labor; it will improve its implements, multiply its facilities, vary its products, and increase its fruits. It will affect the proprietorship of land; and, by bringing great estates into the market, will distribute the wealth and the population more evenly over the surface of the country. The three million of blacks will easily dispose of themselves in a land so vast in extent, so hospitable in climate, and so rich in production. There will be more than enough for everybody to do. Emigrants will pour in, and, instead of living apart in scattered colonies, will spread throughout the communities, imparting their vigor and disseminating their spirit. Brazil has before it a magnificent future. Her Government has the sagacity to see the direction in which it lies; the intelligence to descry the means by which it is to be assured, and the courage to inaugurate it. We welcome Brazil into the family of great States. Now when will Spain say "*Ad sum*"?


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